

Volunteers of America

Mary Leffler
Director of Community
Engagement
mleffler@voain.org
317-686-9871

Volunteers of America

Brandon Hall Reentry Center

- CARF Accredited
- Clients from MCCC & BOP & VA
- Serving an executed sentence (2:1 usually)
- 180 bed capacity (144 corrections)
- July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012 total of 660 men served in residence
- 53% Black; 38% white; 9% other races
- Average age 40 – but MCCP ave. age 31



Theodora House Reentry Center

- CARF Accredited
- Clients from MCCC & BOP
- Serving an executed sentence (2:1 usually)
- 90 bed capacity
- July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012 total of 398 females served in residence
- 60% white; 33% black; 7% other races
- Average age 37



Healing Families

This voluntary program provides a comprehensive array of services designed to address the challenges of overcoming trauma and rebuilding families separated by incarceration. Services include:

Assessment, service planning, anger management, grief group, healthy relationship group, individual, couples and family counseling, trauma recovery group, parenting education, case management and barrier buster funds.

Services are currently offered to both clients in residential setting at Theodora House and via Crime Prevention grant funding to non-residential clients.

- 148 clients served in Calendar Year 2012 (63 Theodora House Residential; and since 7/1/2012 – 85 in outpatient status through CP Grant)
- First quarter Crime Prevention Stats are very promising. 77% of clients showing significant progress or successful graduation- with only 6% of clients rearrested and 12% relapsing.

What practices are in place to add knowledge/skills during time of incarceration?

- Within the “traditional work release” setting – programs are offered to clients as identified by the IRAS and are used as a “compliment” to employment outside of the facility. Finding a job and working have traditionally been the top priority that our contractors have identified for the clients assigned to our facilities.
- Additionally, employment and stable housing are the factors that must be maintained to be considered for sentence modification or reassignment to lesser restrictive environments such as home detention or day reporting. Thus, employment is typically the top priority that clients identify to our staff.
- Programs offered (for most clients these are on a voluntary basis):
Brandon Hall: substance abuse counseling; Inside/Out Dads; job skills; anger management
Theodora House: substance abuse counseling, parenting, individual, couples and family counseling, trauma recovery, grief management, healthy relationships
- Since most programs offered are voluntary, assessing motivation to change and getting clients to participate is often challenging.

What are costs associated with this?

- Rapid turnover of clients through work release, CTP and by modification make it difficult for clients to complete any comprehensive program at the reentry center - many are released mid-program and do not return to complete programming- often not fully realizing the investment made in their programming
- The emphasis on QUICK employment – versus self-sustaining skill or trade development – shifts the clients’ focus to “getting a job” versus establishing a career path or building for future – often clients do NOT retain the jobs they have held during work release upon exit
- A cost to VOA of this rapid cycling, low wage-earning client, is reduced collection of subsistence payments, which offsets their cost of care. VOA is fortunate to have a strong track record of garnering grants and other private supports; however this has proven to be far easier for services for women as opposed to services for our male clients
- Because clients are working outside of the facility on a wide variety of work schedules, the actual delivery of any programs is compromised. It is far easier to deliver intensive programming while clients are incarcerated. Asking employers to modify and adjust schedules to support treatment or other programming can be seen by employers as invasive or another deterrent to hiring clients with those restrictions.

What are the policy implications for the city/state?

- County, state and federal systems would have to subsidize work release at 100% for a period of time in order to allow for trade skills or other meaningful employment certification programming to occur
- While ideally a way for clients to “pay for a portion of their sentence”, the fee structure of work release makes it nearly impossible for clients to exit with any significant savings from their earnings in order to establish stable housing
- Modifications or early releases from work release would need to be re-evaluated to ensure that clients are able to complete designated programs and step down at a pace consistent with their case plan progress

Promising Practices/Strategies #1

- DOL – Provides clients with comprehensive support services to improve their ability for stable self-sufficiency in the community - including supported/subsidized employment, trade certifications, family supportive services
- VOA was recently awarded funding from the Dept. of Labor to provide these services to 250 women in Marion County (10% of target population or 25 men may be served)

Promising Practices/Strategies #2

- Helping Men Recover: Trauma Informed Curriculum for Criminally Justice Involved Men
- Comprehensive county-wide training in the EPICS2/STARZ program (NIC)
- Program interventions targeted to delayed development of the 18-24 year old male population (nearly 1/3 of Brandon Hall-MCCC clients are in this age group on a given day – and present with greatest custody and supervision issues)

Promising Practices/Strategies #3

- Comprehensive Transition Program for Clients Identified with Mental Illness- First Day Out
- Trained case managers set up safe/stable plans that address:
 - Housing – identify the housing plan – assess stability & potential risks
 - Medication access & Medication Management
 - Set up and accompany clients to treatment providers (make the hand-off)
 - Identify resources for meeting basic needs

Summary comments

- We struggle – as the entire system does – in how to measure the costs of “future crime” and “generational crime” to our community
- However, it is our belief that the investment of resources in both individuals and family structures can in the long-term provide great cost savings
- Further, as a non-profit, this is a case for support that seems to be heard and supported by many of our funding partners